

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 OSLO 01985 261551Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
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AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1985

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NO
SUBJECT: HIGH LEVEL SOVIET VISIT TO NORWAY

REF: REYKJAVIK 0558

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNDERSECRETARY STOLTENBERG BRIEFED DCM APRIL 25TH ON 24-HOUR VISIT LATE LAST WEEK OF SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZEMSKOV. ACCORDING TO STOLTENBERG NO NEW GROUND WAS BROKEN DURING THE DISCUSSIONS, WHICH TOOK PLACE AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN OSLO. HOWEVER, THE GON WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FRANK HIGH LEVEL TALKS WITH THE USSR. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING THE COURSE OF A CALL ON ANOTHER SUBJECT, MFA UNDER-SECRETARY STOLTENBERG BRIEFED THE DCM APRIL 25TH ON THE RECENT 24-HOUR VISIT TO OSLO OF SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZEMSKOV. STOLTENBERG STATED THAT THE VISIT HAD BEEN PROPOSED ON SHORT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 OSLO 01985 261551Z

NOTICE TO THE NORWEGIANS BY THE LOCAL SOVIET AMBASSADOR (KIRICHENKO) WHO OFFERED TO ASK THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TO STOP OVER IN OSLO ON HIS WAY BACK FROM HIS VISIT TO REYKJAVIK (REFTEL) PROVIDED THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD AGREE TO DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM. THE GON EXPRESSED AGREEMENT AND ZEMSKOV ARRIVED IN OSLO FRIDAY APRIL 22ND FOR 24 HOURS OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS. NEITHER THE SOVIET NOR NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE ANNOUNCED THE

VISIT, STOLTENBERG NOTING THAT THE GON FELT IT WAS PREFERABLE TO KEEP THE TALKS "LOW KEY AND INFORMAL."

3. ZEMSKOV LED A SOVIET DELEGATION IN BROAD TALKS ON MULTI-LATERAL ISSUES WITH NORWEGIAN MFA OFFICIALS FRIDAY MORNING AND OVER A WORKING LUNCH. THE DELEGATIONS COVERED GENERAL INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS SUCH AS DETENTE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND ESPECIALLY PREPARATIONS FOR THE BELGRADE CSCE CONFERENCE. STOLTENBERG STATED THAT NOTHING NEW CAME OF THESE TALKS.

4. ZEMSKOV THEN HAD A WIDE-RANGING PRIVATE TALK FRIDAY AFTERNOON WITH ONLY KIRICHENKO, FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND AND STOLTENBERG PRESENT. ACCORDING TO STOLTENBERG, ZEMSKOV RAISED A NUMBER OF ISSUES BUT REFUSED TO GO INTO DETAIL ON ANY OF THEM ARGUING THAT HIS JOB WAS TO EXPRESS THE BROAD POLITICAL VIEW OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT LEAVING THE DETAILS TO OTHER PEOPLE. STOLTENBERG CHARACTERIZED THE PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS AS "VERY DIRECT AND FRANK."

5. IN THE PRIVATE SESSION ZEMSKOV PICKED UP THE NOW-FAMILIAR SOVIET ERITICISM OF THE NORWEGIAN PRESS FOR ITS "ANTI-SOVIET ATTITUDE." ZEMSKOV APPARENTLY COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE NORWEGIAN POSITION THAT THEIR PRESS WAS FREE AND THEREFORE THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT CONTROL IT. THE RUSSIAN ALLEGED THAT NORWAY HAS "THE MOST ANTI-SOVIET PRESS IN EUROPE" AND ASKED RHETORICALLY "IF THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CONTROL IT, WHO DOES? NATO?" STOLTENBERG SAID ZEMSKOV DID NOT SEEM PERSUADED THAT THE LABOR PARTY PAPER ("ARBEIDERBLADET") DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT GOVERNMENT, OR EVEN PARTY, POLICY IN ALL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 OSLO 01985 261551Z

OF ITS WRITINGS. (STOLTENBERG NOTED THAT DURING THE DISCUSSION ON THE PRESS, THE RUSSIANS DID NOT RAISE THE RECENT NRK INTERVIEW WITH SOVIET DISSIDENT SAKHAROV-OSLO 1788).

6. ZEMSKOV THEN ASKED WHY THE NORWEGIAN PUBLIC WAS SO NEGATIVE TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION. THE NORWEGIANS POINTED OUT THAT SUCH AN ATTITUDE WAS NOT UNUSUAL FOR A COUNTRY OF 4 MILLION LIVING NEXT TO A SUPER POWER. ZEMSKOV'S REPLY WAS THAT THE FINNS, WHO HE SAID HAD MORE REASON TO INVOKE THAT ARGUMENT THAN THE NORWEGIANS, DID NOT DISPLAY THE SAME ANTI-SOVIET SUSPICION. STOLTENBERG SAID THE NORWEGIANS DEMURRED ARGUING THAT IT WAS THEIR IMPRESSION THE FINNISH PUBLIC WAS SUSPICIOUS OF THE SOVIETS BUT PERHAPS THE FINNS DID NOT TELL THE SOVIETS OF THEIR SUSPICION AS DIRECTLY AS THE NORWEGIANS. ZEMSKOV DENIED THAT THIS WAS THE FINNISH PUBLIC ATTITUDE.

7. ACCORDING TO STOLTENBERG, ZEMSKOV RAISED THE QUESTION OF GERMAN TROOPS PARTICIPATING IN EXERCISES IN NORWAY FIVE TIMES DURING THE TALKS. HOWEVER, CONTRARY TO THE HARSH

MANNER IN WHICH ZEMSKOV RAISED THE ISSUE IN ICELAND, (REFTEL), HE REFERRED TO THE SUBJECT RATHER JOKINGLY IN HIS TALKS IN OSLO. THE NORWEGIANS MERELY REITERATED THEIR INTENTION TO NORMALIZE THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE FRG.

8. ZEMSKOV'S ONLY REFERENCE TO THE OUTSTANDING BOUNDARY DISPUTE IN THE BARENTS SEA WAS TO INFORM THE NORWEGIANS OF THE SOVIETS' VIEW THAT THERE WAS NO DISPUTED AREA. STOLTENBERG DETECTED A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE ON SVALBARD DURING THE CURRENT TALKS IN OSLO ON THE PART OF THE SOVIETS, SO THAT NOW THE TWO GOVERNMENTS BELIEVE THAT MANY OF THEIR PRACTICAL DAILY PROBLEMS ON SVALBARD CAN PERHAPS BE RESOLVED WITHOUT HAVING THEM ESCALATE INTO POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

9. IN SUMMARY, STOLTENBERG SAID HIS GOVERNMENT FOUND THE TALKS WITH ZEMSKOV USEFUL. THE NORWEGIANS MADE THE POINT TO THE RUSSIANS THAT THEY WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH LEVEL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 OSLO 01985 261551Z

EXCHANGES OF VIEW SUCH AS THIS ONE.

10. COMMENT: ZEMSKOV APPARENTLY OMITTED HIS ANTI-US SPEECHES WHILE IN OSLO, PREFERRING TO TAKE UP THE NOW-STANDARD SOVIET COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE NORWEGIAN PRESS. WE SUSPECT ONE REASON THE GON PREFERRED NOT TO PUBLICIZE THE TALKS WAS TO AVOID RAISING EXPECTATIONS THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WERE GOING TO NEGOTIATE ON THEIR OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS. FACED WITH THE RUSSIAN'S OFFER TO STOP BY FOR A CHAT ON HIS WAY HOME, THE NORWEGIANS HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO SEE WHAT HE HAD ON HIS MIND.
ANDERS

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